

APSB SEAC 1-30-20.m4a

Lynn Hathaway [00:00:01] This is our very first official call this meeting to order. 12:07 pm.

Lynn Hathaway [00:00:06] OK. So welcome, everybody, to the first Ascension Parish Special Education Advisory Council, folks who have been committee members. I'm Lynn Hathaway. I'm the director of special education here. As I said in the email today, be kind of informational. But today is really where we kind of get to start and kind of dove into what your issues and concerns are and how we think we can move the parish forward for our kids with special needs. So, thank you all for being here. We can talk a little bit later about the timing of this, whether, you know, a noontime is works for everyone or not. I thought it might be good for the first one. I'm pulling a teacher away from the school. I don't like to do that too much, but we have lots of folks here off the table. So, I'm going to go get started with some information. And this is interesting. So, think you just threw some information because with this council, we're going to try to get through about three different areas today. First, we're going to welcome folks and give it to know you just a little bit about why you're interested in what you're hoping to be able to contribute to this team. I'm looking forward to hearing all about that. We're going to get to know some of our folks who work in this building, who might be people who may be resources forced down the line. They're not committee members, but they're here to kind of see what they do within the building. So, we'll make some introductions around and then we'll get to the meat and potatoes of this meeting, which is too focused on getting started, some issues and concerns, things like that. So, first, we're just going to welcome folks out of this Miss Chrystal White and Miss Biyaka Williams. Leslie Watts our special education teacher? And is Daniel Louque is our other specialty stakeholder. She is the head of our People Appraisal Department. OK. So, I'm going to put the four of you on the spot. I'll get to our other folks in just a second. I'm going to put the four of you on the spot, though, which is a little bit about yourself and why you're interested in being a member of the committee.

Chrystal White [00:02:30] My name is Chrystal White. I have a six-year-old daughter. She her whole life has been delayed. But, you know, that has inspired me to learn more and more and more about all kinds of disabilities. So, I started advocating at the state capital. I sit on a few different committees; I sit on the Louisiana developmental disabilities council for this region. And I also sit on the regional advisory committee for Capital Area Human Services. And then at the state level for the state advisory committee. It's become a passion just to learn more, do more, help push the community forward. This bill has been such a neat thing to watch. It's the first time I've ever seen a bill at the Capitol, watch it become law and then now see it implemented and now get to be a part of that. And I just think it is the neatest thing in the whole wide world to watch the entire process and now it just come to fruition. And this bill came from three parents' heads. You know, like this is this is where it came from. And to see those parents and now get to see them, see their baby come to life. It's really, it's a neat thing. I'm glad to be here. I'm extremely glad to be here to thank you.

Biyaka Williams [00:04:03] I am Biyaka Williams. That's not the correct spelling, but it helps make the pronunciation. It's fine it helps for the pronunciation, it's B-I-Y-A-K-A. I am a mother of four. I've lived in Ascension Parish for almost four years. My first grader, my six-year-old daughter Blair, has autism and is non-verbal. And as I'm sure all of you can imagine or have, as you all interact in the special education community, you can imagine how tough that is to have a daughter who goes on in the world every day, who is not able to verbalize back what she's experiencing. So that's extremely difficult. But to know that I

have a community of people who also care for her, are looking out for open are to build up communication. It's like the best thing that ever happened to you because you have to have some level of peace as you allow your children to go to the world every day. Professionally, I worked in higher education, all of my career. At the beginning, I was in human resources at the University of New Orleans. And then I started working in fundraising at Tulane and at LSU? So, in my work world, the way this kind of connects also for me, because I see every day like the impact of volunteerism, philanthropy, just knowing what's available and what we should be talking about, what's the good news of the community? How can we inform others of that good news? So, I was really excited for this opportunity to kind of learn with and from all of you and putting in where I can. So, I appreciate this. Thank you, and this is my daughter, Blake, the youngest of the four? She is six months and a party girl. She is really tired. I am hoping she just goes to sleep. honestly. My daughter goes to Duplessis Primary. Crystal - PVP

Lynn Hathaway [00:06:09] I'm going to go around. Jackie Tisdale, here's our Ascension Parish public relations officer. Right. But Jackie is also a parent. So, she's not actually a committee member. Like I said, we're open to the public, but she is a member of the state special education advisory panel. So, she's kind of an added resource that we have as to what is happening at the state levels as well as information.

Jackie Tisdale [00:06:36] So my oldest two sons, my oldest is autistic and ADHD is diagnosed at four years old and kicked out of his private pre-K because of it, which brought us to the public school system Prairieville Primary actually, and had such a great, amazing experience there with him and his education. I worked in higher education for a long time that when the public information office position came open, I wanted to work for the school system. And it really, truly was because of our experience as a special ed there. And it's been amazing. Working for the school district, I believe in it even more strongly than I did as a parent. And so, I am on my third year on the special education advisory panel for the state is not the same when you're on that one.

Chrystal White [00:07:26] I'm not on SEAP, I have been a proxy before, and it's always we miss each other. I sub in for my friend Kim, and dang I wanted to meet her.

Jackie Tisdale [00:07:36] Yeah. Yeah, I miss that. Every once in a while, we have an emergency evacuation to school, and I miss my meetings. So. But we have one next week. So that's been a really nice experience. And I imagine this model comes after that. So, I mean, that group received information from the State Department and weighs in on things. You know, we vote we make some recommendations on policy that it's just basically carried back to BESE and they take that into consideration. And so, we've seen a couple of times that our suggestions were actually heard and implemented. So, it's been nice to be a part of that, for sure. And I just I'm excited to see this happening at the parish level and be a resource.

Danielle Louque [00:08:24] I don't know the appropriate, can I just ask a question? I don't know the rules, but anyway so like our like the committee we meet here, like do we give reports to the advisory council you are on or is it just separate.

Jackie Tisdale [00:08:41] It's really for the school board.

Lynn Hathaway [00:08:41] The reports we give will go Mr. Alexander.

Danielle Louque [00:08:41] So, it will be just within our parish? OK,

Jackie Tisdale [00:08:52] But I you know, I'd like to sit down, because if there is something that has State policy implications, I mean, I know what's going on so that I can be a voice at that table, too.

Danielle Louque [00:09:04] I just want to know if they just merge together or.

Jackie Tisdale [00:09:09] I don't know. I mean, this is new for every parish. You know, I mean, there's nothing formal that I'm aware of, but who knows what might come out of it because it's not. Yeah, not every parish has a representative on the statewide council is a big council panel. But it's not you know, it's not every single parent represented.

Chrystal White [00:09:27] I know that other states have these like Virginia really came from Virginia, their model, and they've really seen different things happen in their schools. What's a state like? Graduation rates have increased, and different things and they really accredit it to these groups that they have for each individual district. So, I know that also another place other states have well and work really closely with their superintendents. And are able to get new ideas implemented, it's really neat to see other states do it and we're doing it now.

Danielle Louque [00:10:11] Interesting. My name is Danielle Louque, as Miss Hathaway said I'm coordinator of people appraisal. So, and with identified children, you probably know the process of pupil appraisal, SBLC and whole process that it is. So, I've been working in Ascension Parish for about twenty-two years. I came here previously I was working in Lafourche parish. I am a school psychologist and I worked in that capacity for about probably for about ten or eleven years in the school system and then prior to getting the position as coordinator of pupil appraisal. So, I kind of oversee our evaluation teams. And so, one of the things that we get when we get parent complaints, it's a lot of time it trickles down to better communication. So, like there was a lack of communication somewhere. And so, I feel that being on here with parents, we can coordinate and maybe come up with some maybe some different ways of communication between school, SBLC, pupil appraisal and parents. So that's one thing that I will look forward to and also the betterment of the children.

Nicole Grimes [00:11:37] Hi, I'm Nicole Grimes and one of the special ed supervisors, and I'm excited to be here today. So, in my role I supervise some of the primary schools and I work with middle schools as a whole with problem solving. I also supervised the behavior team, gifted and talented and the special needs counselors and a host of many other things. They may come up or arise that Ms. Hathaway says, hey, I need you to work on this. So, all the supervisors in the district serve on different committees. And, you know, a committee may pop up here and there for different purposes. But some off the top of my head are accountability. I work with Jackie sometimes with branding or public information from the instructional side, trying to think leadership, things of that nature. So, I also support principals as a primary or principal. Carol Smith and Sandra Alford, too. So, the great thing about this role is you never know what is going to lift like every day and what's going to come up. And I just love advocating for special education students or gifted and talented students and students that just need a voice in general and someone to push them forward. So, I'm here for the kids and I'm excited to meet you both. I already know Danielle. She's on the behavior team that we work together all day, every day.

Leslie Watts [00:13:20] I'm Leslie Watts. I teach at Dutchtown Middle school. I teach seventh grade this year. I'm very new to special ed in my career. I've taught 8 years in a

private school where we weren't given any help or even like accommodations allowed for struggling students. So, we just had to push through. Just however the curriculum said so when an opportunity arises, I could switch over to DTM and I was very excited. It's kind of just fell on my lap and it was not a position I was ready for. But I went in as an inclusion teacher for eighth grade math and I had never even been in that realm of teaching before and always taught fifth and sixth on the ELA side, the writing side and the history. I wanted to get in the public schools and just see if there was a better opportunity and more strategies to help the struggling students. So, when Mr. Walker gave me that opportunity, I just saw the need for special ed being the inclusion teacher. Well, the core teacher with inclusion in my class, I saw it even more. The team of special ed versus regular ed and how we had to collaborate. And last year, the Add-on program through Ascension Parish came about. Mrs. Grimes, you any of the other coordinators just getting to know the special ed side and how helpful you could just be with those kids and just help the teachers? I've been teaching our new teachers and just need help on how to help their students serving in the class. I do. Inclusion for seventh grade this year, just giving them a voice and sitting close to them and just getting to know them. What do you need to be successful? Just helping them more. I'm excited. I'm again new to the law on the policies, but I'm very willing to soak it in and learn and hopefully bring it back to school for our teachers.

Terri Tate [00:15:24] I'm Terri Tate, I'm the other special education supervisor. Nicole and I have a lot of shared duties. We work really close together on a lot of things outside of this building. I support Duplessis Primary school and Lowery Elementary school and working with those principals in any way that they might need in our building and the special education areas. I support our OTs and PTs and our preschool students. Just looking at curriculum and how do we implement those theme and strategy across primary and high schools. I've been, this is my 31st year as an educator, all 31 years have been in Ascension Parish and I couldn't imagine working anywhere else. And I've been in special education all those years and I've seen our department and our district grow so much. I mean, adding schools and just growing our department and where students really are full circle. When I first started teaching, you defiantly knew who the special education students were who the special education teachers are. And now I feel like you go into classrooms across the school. You don't know that anymore because it's so inclusive. And I feel like our students in the district have just been brought up with such diverse needs in the classroom that it really doesn't matter if the child has a label or not. They're very much more accepting than they were 25 or 30 years ago. So, it's been a pleasure to work in this district for this many years and it's been an honor to watch the growing trend and upward trend we've had in serving our students with special needs. I am excited to be here and help in any way that I can.

Lynn Hathaway [00:17:33] This is an open meeting forum. We'll be taking minutes. And Amber has agreed to help us out with that but on other fronts, Amber is the trouble shooter in the building. She is tech savvy. And one of our main administrative folks who keeps our building running with orders/supplies and the whole works so good. Welcome to everyone. Welcome to our first meeting. We're going to keep moving along. Nicole, Terri, Amber. They sit here not as members of the council. So, they're just here. I've asked them to come in because I thought it'd be important for y'all to even understand how this building kind of functions to so that you can. We made that may be helpful to what you decide to focus in on. But I did want to talk to just so you're aware of all of the different levels of support, because as you sit on this council, you are parents of your children. You're here as a parent. Well, we do. You are representing all of students with special needs across the district. And most of that runs through this building. But the delivery is out in school.

So, I kind of sometimes it's confusing to know directors, supervisors, coordinators. Just wanted to give you a little structure, everything that we go through today. You can have access to it. I did share with all of you all the members of a Google Drive folder. And if you have any difficulty with being able to access that on your computer or anything, just let me know. But it be a way that we can share information in between meetings and have access to everything we need. So, I kind of talked about at the district level, Terri and Nicole and myself, director and supervisors there here in this building. We have a main leadership team. We have 11 different coordinators on that on that team. Danielle is this person right here, one, pupil appraisal coordinator. So, this is Danielle pupil appraisal. We have a speech coordinator. We have two high school coordinators. We have three middle school coordinators, primary school coordinators. They all work out of here. But they are assigned to all the schools in their parish. So, we have they typically are overseeing three schools and supporting the programs at those schools. We also have program facilitators. We have an early childhood facilitator. We have an autism behavior team facilitator who works. They work with these coordinators on different teams. We have a LEAP connect facilitator. This is for our students who may maybe alternately assessed. A speech facilitator, assistant technology facilitator as well. We've got some specialized teams, our early childhood team, our Leap Connect team and our autism behavior team all run by cross brain. We have vertical and horizontal alignment of our coordinators support the schools and their alignment with teams across the different primary middle and high school. We have reps at every level. Over here, all of these folks also operate out of LeBlanc but make most of the work is out in schools. So, we have a whole pupil appraisal team, the psychologists, social workers and diagnosticians they are all assigned schools and they're part of that eval process. And Danielle really coordinates this whole effort here. We have occupational physical therapists, adaptive PE teachers, gifted, talented in art, music, theater teachers who run from this building. There are a couple of hospital homebound teachers. We're happy to add a position there because we have more students who are receiving services at home at this time this year. Two parent facilitators, Wanda August and Kathy Edmonston are there to provide information and resources to parents if they need that. And then our administrative and technical support, Amber plus, we have a couple other secretaries who help keep all of that other paperwork and everything like that. That's kind of the structure of the way we operate from out of here. And I thought it might be important for you to understand our population of students. Who do we serve in this parish? So, we have almost 2,200 students in the parish with disabilities. And this kind of breaks it down by age in the 3 to 5-year-old range. We have 334, the six to eleven is our kind of our biggest range right here with over a thousand students with disabilities. Twelve to seventeen 802 students, an 18 to 21 plus. Because we do have students who are approaching that twenty second birthday. 116 students in that age. So important because this is who you represent. And the parents who are with students. So, this is just a breakdown of some of the exceptionalities. If your child is evaluated and he qualifies for special education services under autism, we have 175 students in the parish. There you can see. This is speech and language services are a big group of our students. Specific learning disabilities is our highest. And you can see some of the other not quite as common exceptionalities areas, but these are all the state mandated exceptionalities that exist this or younger ones to developmental delay until they might be evaluated into one of the other exceptionalities. A breakdown of students. Also important for you to know, too. Because in your work in the direction that you head using the students who represent some of the needs that have, we may be able to get more information about those areas. If you need it, we can talk further. This is our parish core values. Just to share that with you. And I think the purpose of this whole committee really falls so well in line with those 4 core values of teamwork, leadership and service and learning. I think being a member of this team as those core areas is really what it's what it's really all about. So hopefully we'll be

able to also be moving forward with those values. So, in your folders for my members, there was a little bit of information. So, this whole special education advisory council started from a law that was passed this past summer. And so, you do have a copy of that? No, you don't have a copy of that act. I'm sorry. Our school board then passed a policy in line with that act. And that is what you do have a copy of. So that is what you're operating under. Ascension Parish School Board. OK. So, some of the, you know, the main responsibilities of this team and I do really want to emphasize that I'm here as a chairperson. I'm not a voting member. So, the four of you represent the voting members of this council. I'm here to help facilitate. I will be putting together the agendas that you need to do. I will get any information that you possibly need. I can tell you or find out the position of the parish on any on any things. But this really is your committee, and I'm just here to facilitate it. If you need any help along the way, I will be right there with you. But I'm here to help out. But I really want you to kind of grab hold of this committee and you'll be able to push it forward as to what you see needs as. And I will gather information, gather up people if we need people to come talk and then make some determinations about what focus areas.

Chrystal White [00:26:48] What if there was a tie and a 2 2 tie? Is there someone since there are 4 members? What would happen if we have a tie, would you vote then? Sorry.

Lynn Hathaway [00:27:01] No, no, no. I was just, let me tell you. I'm glad you brought that up. We we're going to be in a learning process through this. The open meeting forum means that we run by Robert's rules of order. I am I think I did it when I was 4H president, my team maybe. But so, we're going to be learning those things together and we may have to dive in and find out the answer to that question, because I think it's a good one. I did give you some helpful hints packets in your folder, though, so if you take a look at the left side, you may catch me up and say, hey, don't make don't we need to do that or something like that? This page is Robert's rules of order. If you've ever attended a school board meeting, they run kind of in the same manner, the first pages of a bit of a cheat sheet or some of the simpler things that you need to know with Robert's rules of order. But we do have to when you do official actions, we do have to make motions. And there are some steps and guidance for this. So, I'm giving you a little bit homework for this. I've dropped this into that folder so that you can access it electronically, too. Some procedural things. So just a few cheat sheets that we're going to be working together on becoming more familiar with those things. If you've been on other committees and you have familiar catches like you really do, please stop us and move forward. I hear them doing that, the school board meeting, so I am sure it's ok for us to do it here where I think you need to make sure that this is a motion. Received this way. So put some of the requirements. This is open to the public. It is published on the parish Web site. The agenda was posted more than 24 hours in advance of this meeting. We do take minutes and at the next meeting we will confirm those minutes and make sure that everybody agrees upon those minutes and accept those. And those will also get posted online. Majority constitutes a forum. We do need at least that's where we get it gets a little bit tricky with that 4. Mr. Alexander wanted to start small with this and then see where this all turns and go. So, we did start with the four members, but it does leave us a little bit in a quandary. Hopefully this is not a contentious meeting, but you never know. You may have different opinions. You know, you are here for one-year terms, but because this is kind of the inaugural, when your turn comes all the way through the end of next year. So here this is the real purpose that was outlined by the school board that aligns with the law is to provide advice and recommendations regarding special education policies, procedures and resources to engage in outreach activities to the community at large to increase the level of knowledge, support and collaboration with respect to special education and to provide the

superintendent with an annual written report regarding your activities in this committee. So, the first one actually will due after the next meeting in April. Well, what you come up with, I do want to extend his regrets. His intention was to be here. One of the board members, family members passed away in their wake is conflicting with his time. So, he sends his regrets. He will be here at the next meeting. OK. So now we kind of come down to what we're here for, which is to really start to hear some ideas about where we want to start. This this is the first year. I don't know where it's headed, but like I said, I'm here to guide and take notes and we'll record all of that. Really looking for some ideas. If you have things you bring into the table about what you want to address. We're going to we're going to go and start to jump into it and then maybe come away with some takeaways and some things that individually we kind of look into along the way and collaborate around to come back together and see where we move next.

Biyaka Williams [00:31:47] So I was wondering, you gave us those student needs like if its developmental, Autism, hearing or whatever. How does that go into budgetary decisions? On like funding more positions. Is that a consideration and funding of the services? Those changing needs in demographics.

Lynn Hathaway [00:32:11] The changing needs of the students are constantly a part of the budgeting process. The IEPs really drive what happens for our students. So those IEP teams are really critical in making decisions about what a student needs in order to provide. I mean, you're familiar with the FAPE, free appropriate public education. It's a requirement of special education for our district to provide FAPE to all students. So, what is appropriate for every child is decided by the IEP team and by our resources that are available. Our funds come from the federal government, but they are funded through the Louisiana Department of Education and budget items run through the superintendents. So, it's probably general answers to a more specific question, but we try to look needs these events needs arise. We try to figure out what resource do we have? Can we stretch that resource? Do we have other things available to help with that? What can we do to help support students?

Biyaka Williams [00:33:44] I was wondering how often do other parents, when school starts back. Is there an opportunity for parents of special needs children to hear this type of informational special ed services that are offered?

Lynn Hathaway [00:33:58] There is also, I guess there are a few avenues for that one that maybe when we go back to those when we talk about this right here, that might be an area that maybe we can beef up, you know, and with your help in figuring out what maybe that could look like. I can tell you that superintendent has a general parent advisory committee. And he I've spoken at that before. And I do share information like that. Students that we have what our what our focus for the year might be. What we're trying to do some initiatives that we're taking on. And I'll share that. Those are those are also public. So, I may be able to share with you also the dates of those meetings, too. It may be something you want to go sit and listen to. Or maybe I can bring back and share. This is what was shared at that that meetings that we have in information at school board meetings, oftentimes we share information. Shares of information about Special Education Department, what we are working on. There's lots of layers of collaboration that happen within this building. My leadership team here, all of those folks were kind of coordinating all those different teams out in the schools. We come together to talk about issues, how we can team, and problem solve around children needs. If children are struggling, things like that, what we can do to help support at school in providing services to students. But yeah, maybe an area that's you know, maybe we need more information out there. There's some

general information on the Web site. It's not the easiest to navigate through, but there is some. But there may be some other things we can do to beef that up. You can catch that in minutes. Right. So, you both shot your hands up at the same time. So, what were you thinking?

Chrystal White [00:36:20] So I've been attending a few conferences and things. And what I've really been focusing on is listening to adults with disabilities and what they would like, what they would have done differently. Liked like to have seen in schools or anything like that. And the one thing that seems to be a commonality among self-advocates is they wish in the younger ages. And Jr High that there would have been a mentorship program with a peer like a typical peer and there would have been more interaction, more time to develop a mentorship program, a role where it wasn't a para helping them. There was another peer assisting them as well. So, I started really diving into that since that was of interest and I've noticed a lot of other states implemented different types of programs that it typically is in high school. But the younger ones, it starts where your library would have books, on kids with disabilities and you have a third grader come read to the pre-K kindergartners about differences and kids learn from each other. We all know that. And they said a good idea was to have a sibling of a child with disabilities like an older sibling come read. So, when they ask questions about differences, it comes from your third to fifth grade level in the library saying, no, that's, you know, being different now than my brother and my sister. So, it becomes more relatable. So, I really started diving into that. I know that LSU HDC has a pilot program that has some really good outcomes where they do kind of like the pecs to show people how to start a conversation in the cafeteria. You know how you can communicate because I know my daughter is also non-verbal, so she has alternate methods of communication. So, it's really, you know, to help, it would be like sign language or Braille or, you know, to help people, kids especially at that level, to understand it's different. But it's the same as communication and everybody universally, no matter. I think we're all humans. And the one thing we all want is, is love. So, I think that that is a universal thing that could meet everyone with disabilities needs friendship. That's just a human aspect of life. So, I really have been thinking about some sort of friendship program or mentorship.

Lynn Hathaway [00:39:11] So I am kind of hearing two things that sort of relate to each other in a way. One is about more information out there about resources and things like that. Another about me, maybe more of a district wide approach because I do know that someone like a Terri, you might be able to speak and Nicole is just being out in the school more than I get to be there and then I am out in the schools. I know a high school level. Some of the high school's kind of have that here. Is your system already set up? But at the younger age, I'm not sure that that's something.

Leslie Watts [00:39:49] We just started one at Dutchtown this year. Our sixth grade, all of sixth grade is paired with an eighth grader. And we have special days where the eighth grade go meet. And I don't know the logistics. And that could be something I get some information on. What did they talk about? How did they pair up the special needs and because they're on all grade levels? So that seems to be working just from what I'm hearing. Being in seventh grade, I don't get to see even though I don't know much, but they seem to be really enjoying that out of class time and just kind of get to know an eighth graders can step up and be leaders

Danielle Louque [00:40:33] I know EA has one, because Makenzie talks about it. They do like different activities with the special need's students.

Terri Tate [00:40:43] In their study strategies classroom, they will come in and offer assistance and just be friends. They will make sure at lunchtime they are not sitting alone. So, they're able to be integrated. They go out into the regular population during lunch time. And if it's a severe student they have students come into where their table is, and they are feeding or something like that so that they're not just special needs students. We also have, as Nicole has mentioned, Special Olympics. We have the Allied health programs at all the schools. And they do certain things with special needs classes. As far as their Allied health instruction throughout the whole school year and then for Special Olympics, where they rotate different schools each year to the Special Olympics and are the mentor throughout the whole day. So, I feel like there is a lot of inclusion going on, but I don't know if it as specific as programing or something that you are talking about.

Chrystal White [00:41:49] Share with parents what we are doing, so they are aware and can talk to your kids about it at home.

Biyaka Williams [00:41:54] And I noticed that both of our children or in the 6-11 level.

Lynn Hathaway [00:42:03] I want to tell you that we had other applicants apply and you two were chosen based on what you indicated into something that you are involved in, we thought would be really helpful for the team. But we were hoping that we would have maybe a middle school parent, I am happy we have a middle school teacher. But we did not get a single applicant from the high school level. And I think, you know, that's kind of the way it goes in school, right. The younger the child, the more involved you are like everything. But you can get people to come and speak to the team made possibly about get more information was there so that we're not recreating, but maybe making it more consistent and district a district wide approach to it, because I think those things kind of evolved from individual schools. Set this up in that up. But that means that your child's not in that particular school. Your child might not have access to it. So, awareness for principals about the importance of that and then bringing it down to maybe a lower level with some middle school structures that would work. And some elementary structures. And as we grow in the parish, we have almost 30 schools next year, that we know at a district level and I tell you from some of the meetings that I sit at that we know that we're at that tipping point. We really have to spell out the structures of what things look like to get them consistent across the parish. We got some parents awareness, one was, I am just recopying this, parent awareness about programs, but also kind of some data about numbers.

Biyaka Williams [00:43:47] So I think it felt really helpful to me to know that there are a thousand other children in my child's age group that has special needs.

Lynn Hathaway [00:44:36] We start with that in place for kids in pre-K classrooms where our students with special needs have their peer models right there with them. And you know, it starts and then the structure changes a little bit.

Chrystal White [00:44:54] And then and also like my daughter, six years old, at six years old, like even my friends have reached out to me and they said, you know, Kate's asking about Aubrey and we want to know a healthy way to have a discussion about, you know, because now they're six years old. They're starting to know why doesn't Aubrey talk to me or why does she not want to play with me? Parents also want their children to learn about differences in a healthy way that they can understand. And, you know, my generation wasn't raised with that. We don't know. So, it can be a conversation that you want to be sensitive to, but you also want to do it in a way that your child will have a healthy

relationship with others with differences going forward. So, I think it's also something that typical parents would also appreciate as well as parents of students with disabilities.

Lynn Hathaway [00:45:50] We are trying to capture just a little bit - parent awareness with programs, the resources are there, the actual data, sharing of information, a mentorship or peer type program that's consistent, so that it is happening across the board, finding out what's already out there and see how that lines up and maybe even going into, if you have some articles and research on that, we could start to put that information as you are our folder. But I think one of the biggest areas where we're lacking students. I would say really the strongest here from what I knew. And then it's like I said in the pre-K level, I think it's strongly in place with the way those classrooms are structured. These two levels right here, I mean, this might be great, starting ground right here with primary with Leslie's help we can get some information about what else is happening at the other levels. The good thing about the way our parish is structured outside of here is very similar to our structure here. We have teams of folks who collaborate around each of these levels. So, there's a director of high schools, the director of middle schools and director of primary schools, and then there are folks who work on their teams around those issues. We have checkpoints, people that we can bring information back to the table and do some information gathering about that, maybe develop a survey, see what's happening and what parents think about that, a school survey or what's happening parent survey or what might they like to see.

Chrystal White [00:47:35] What is the response of those surveys.

Lynn Hathaway [00:47:41] Not very good, it just depends on what the subject is I guess, you know

Chrystal White [00:47:58] In the primary, I don't know how this gets about, but to get resources in the library so kids can choose books about each disability and read up on it. It's like having it in their library also be a part of a choice to read it.

Terri Tate [00:48:22] So we do have, it's kind of depends on the individual school, the library. They want to order a lot of things; I know when I was at OGP we had some visually impaired students. We had Braille books in the library just because that's how they read. But also, for other kids to see what it was about and being a special educator, I was more in tuned to that. And we had other books about disability that we did order specifically to have in the library. I don't think all of the libraries have, that is something that we could share.

Chrystal White [00:49:04] Sometimes it's just you don't know what you don't know, you don't mean to, it's not purposeful. Just you don't know what you don't know.

Nicole Grimes [00:49:14] I think there's also two short films on Disney plus about kids with disabilities and they're like really cute. And I've watched at least one of them. Yeah, the one with the boy kind of like, oh, so those are good too for little kid. Yes. That might be a good resource because it looks like a cartoon well it is a cartoon. But it's Pixar, I think. Yeah. Yeah. Those are awesome.

Leslie Watts [00:49:47] I guess my concern is coming from the instruction, having the resources for the teachers when we're at that point where we've taught so many different ways, this teachers tried, this teachers tried, and the students just not able to get to that mastery point. What else can we do? Some of our teachers are good at asking questions

and asking for help, and some of them just move on because we have so much time for instructional time.

Biyaka Williams [00:50:29] Another question about therapy services that are offered, my daughter gets a couple of really great therapies. But I've heard other therapies that people have used, like music therapy. Things like that, are those at all existent in the parish. Does the parish take a look at emerging therapies to help students who may not be able to crossover to those next levels to use other resources like immersion therapy to get into the next place? I think that's a thought I've had.

Terri Tate [00:51:06] I think we have some of that integrated into the curriculum on the preschool level with Frogstreet, the curriculum that we use, I don't know how much we deviate from the curriculum to include some of those clinical setting type therapy. I think that's a struggle that our system has. You can do so many of those things in a clinical situation because you don't have the demands of a curriculum and content standards to reach, whereas in our preschool curriculum we have some of those integrated, but we have to address the standards. So, there is this frustration point where this is where the child is developmentally. But these are the standards that we have to teach. And I think that some pre-K all the way up to 12th grade and in LEAP connect as well, we have standards. So, I think that's probably a struggle that many of our teachers have.

Biyaka Williams [00:52:11] So, I mentioned that I work at LSU in fundraising, and we had a family that gave a very large gift to establish a music therapy program and they spoke to us about their reasoning for doing that is because they had experienced so many wonderful outcomes from a family member who had a stroke. And then so they brought in some professors who talked about their success on newborns and on children who had autism and other developmental delays and so the room of course went crazy. Everybody loved these people for investing in this therapy. But it also made me think how could we look at other therapies. I am not saying that that's the one. But other therapies that could get a child who's, because my child falls into the kind of example that posed, you can't get it quite there. So, what's next? What do we do? We can't quit. Quitting is not an option, so what's next.

Chrystal White [00:53:19] I have two things. And I'll explain it. So, I was listening to teachers the teachers your side, which is the lack of training that I heard from them consistently. And then I heard I wanted to hear from parents. And a lot of the older parents are telling me that transition services out of high school is a huge, huge gap and their kids, when they age out, there's nothing they don't know where to go. They don't know where to turn. The kids are pacing the house, depressed. I mean, it becomes a big family issue where it becomes a family problem. Not that it's the school's job to continue after 21. I completely understand that. But more helping them with resources to transition after they age out, especially if they're not, I know LRS is supposed to do that, but we're learning there's severe gaps there with that service. So that's really only a certain percentage of high functioning that really. But what we're talking about, those kids that are that fall on this gap, which is a lot, a lot a lot of our kids, and they just don't, no one knows what to do. So, I think if we can focus on that, that's something that even our kids are young, that's where we're going to, we're headed we're headed for that hole. So, I think we need to start thinking ahead of the game.

Leslie Watts [00:54:47] My husband's sister just aged out at 22, but she's twenty-three now. And the Livingston Parish Schools and they had that same question, what do we do? Struggle with different places for her.

Chrystal White [00:55:14] And I know a lot of secondary education, like a lot of the colleges are starting to have programs that we can really start to, it's becoming more and more robust, and I think it's something that this group can stay ahead of, start tracking and giving more resources to that.

Lynn Hathaway [00:55:34] Do we see this as potentially an area here, too? I think it's kind of tied into that. So, lots of things here. It's a new a new group. So, in a certain regard, I think you have to start prioritizing. Where do we start? Where do we start? What would we start working on and focusing in on?

Chrystal White [00:56:08] I think what's doable is to work on parent resources for this group in one year and a mentorship, a peer mentorship.

Lynn Hathaway [00:56:20] Those were the first two thing you said and these kind of bounced off or off of those ideas for going years.

Biyaka Williams [00:56:30] I agree. I think I love that idea of addressing the transition services. And addressing it well, before the year that it happens, where the student is out so possibly starting that conversation as a part of the overall awareness of the total package of what type of special education services could be expected as your student grows in Ascension Parish Schools.

Lynn Hathaway [00:57:02] That is a great starting point there is some work that we do. So, I do think we need to start to break it down that with maybe some takeaways and with some things that maybe you can bring back to the table. So, where did all of you receiving an email from me today with the google folder? Are you guys familiar with how that works? What is that? And I will draw up all resources from today to that folder so that you have those along with the agendas and everything and begin to build. You all have editing privileges in there, too, so you can add folders if you like. Let's see if maybe we can get some takeaways from you all on what steps maybe would be the first steps in moving forward with those. We might want to define a goal around that, you know, and label that out and think about by the end of the term.

Chrystal White [00:58:16] Yeah, you know, this is I don't see much scratch writing, but I draw everything. Very visual, extremely visual. But like for the resources. I was kind of thinking like in the beginning, you need an IEP resources and goal writing examples. And then the data and the information we talk this kind of spending process. And there would be resources on transition. So, it's like something for everyone.

Lynn Hathaway [00:58:52] Are you familiar with Bayou Families Helping Families? Do you, have any of you had positive resources from that group? There is new director over it for the last year. Charlie. So, you're familiar with it.

Biyaka Williams [00:59:17] That's great. I'm a mother of four and a full-time employee. My husband is in grad school. My life is bananas. So, I just want to disclose that. And so, syncing as much information in one place as possible is highly valuable to me. So, when I am at Open House for my daughter, I kind of want to have an opportunity to also gain other things like maybe some of this stuff could be part of my open house experience. I kind of just want to do everything in one place because it makes life easier for me and I can imagine all of us have our crazy life stories. So, if I have to use a different resource and a different resource and a different resource, I want someone to stand right in the

middle and be the facilitator for that information. For me, it just helps so much. It helps my child when I have what I need.

Lynn Hathaway [01:00:15] I'm sure that it's kind of what most parents need too is that there's not time in the day to go searching for information and if there was a one stop shop. So, the point of contact. OK, so where do we move here now. To help facilitate some first steps. I am going to snapshot this and have it for you. What was that graphic you had?

Chrystal White [01:00:47] I started with IEP resources. I know your first IEP meeting your kids young and I like OK. What are your goals and your objectives? I'm like, are you kidding me? Hold on. Give me a minute. I got to go research this. If I would have just had one example of what a goal was like, what is realistic? You know, like parents are clueless.

Danielle Louque [01:01:12] So you mean I thought you were talk about resources for the teachers, so like

Chrystal White [01:01:15] No, I like parent awareness.

Lynn Hathaway [01:01:19] So if this initial stage is just some simple information is critical about this process.

Chrystal White [01:01:26] Yes. And then they always tell you to make a binder, keep everything. Organization is key to that freaking binder. I'm sorry. It's crazy the amount of paperwork we get. And so, like, literally, if someone would have just saved me two years in my life and showed me how to organize an IEP binder and dealt with what would be coming. Like you're going to have your progress notes and you're going to have this letter and this letter come in like.

Danielle Louque [01:01:55] So just like a history. Like a chronological history, like what do I need for first.

Chrystal White [01:02:02] Yeah. And you want to save this and then you see this and look, it's in a binder and this is how you keep it. I'm telling you, you got to keep everything you got to keep everything.

Lynn Hathaway [01:02:17] So as a very busy parents with children with special needs. Have you ever attended any of our parenting sessions that we offer through here maybe you didn't even know about? So, we have two parent facilitator and a couple of our coordinators here at LeBlanc do parenting sessions. We may need more advertising, these maybe some of the topics that they cover, and we may actually have resources.

Leslie Watts [01:02:58] I can the IEP, I can talk to you about instruction and how we'll try to meet the needs. But even if you aren't a teacher with those things, we can bring that to the meeting. Just explain it. Especially the initial one.

Biyaka Williams [01:03:14] There's a perfect example. When I was talking about grabbing everything in one place.

Chrystal White [01:03:23] So the parent feels they are talking are really great. But I think with this, because we have very limited time, we're going to extra therapies were very

stretched thin on our time as a resource that we just don't have. And I wish I could multiply it because I definitely would, and I would be everywhere at once. But if you could do like a video of organizing and putting on one stop, like when a parent goes to your website, it says LeBlanc's or whatever and you click IEP and there I show you this is what you can expect. This is the information you're going to get. Please keep it organized. This year it's going to come in very handy. These are your dividers. Somebody to just show you real quick and then I'm like, I can go back and always click that video. And be like, what is this? What is this?

Lynn Hathaway [01:04:24] If we could accomplish that by the end of next year, would be a huge thing. But we do have, you know, with your help, also, I mean, I have a team of folks and I'm going to I'm really interested in that in any way that I can. They're very savvy. They are out there in the schools and seeing these things. So, we can begin to start to pull together some things that maybe are already out there, but they are just not getting broadcast and getting into parent hands and start to work on what this looks like. And even at our session, maybe I can get you to be actors in the video. As parents, so say hey, this was really important to me and why.

Danielle Louque [01:05:17] I agree, because I mean, when we sit in determination of eligibility meeting with parents, it's a lot of information. And then so they're trying to digest that information on how their child is functioning in comparison to peers. And then they get an IEP and there is a lot of information there. And so like we understand it. And sometimes I have to remind my team, that you need to take a step back because the words are coming out, but it's coming out for people that do it every day. Not for parents. So I totally agree that like a resource where you can go back and flip through and kind of if you're not, remembering what said in the meeting you have a resource where you can go and say, OK, this is what they were talking about. You know, instead of trying to by memory because you're getting all this information coming into you at one time.

Lynn Hathaway [01:06:14] And I feel like it could be posted online. We could get Jackie and her team of interns; they could help us to develop that and start to get that setup in place. I think you're right here. These things are going to be critical pieces of them in here, we should start to research. And this is one that I can get with my team and we can start pulling information and start put into one folder. I can keep you apprised of that progress. And Chrystal you already have some information this time, you could maybe drop the article in there. Everyone on the team could kind of take a look at it. And we can also reach out and see start to see what's out there at all levels.

Chrystal White [01:07:39] When we are gone the next people can continue to organize and push people for adding more resources for everyone.

Lynn Hathaway [01:07:45] And do remember that even as the next team comes in, public is allowed to come in and make comments to the team, you know, help carry legacy. I think this first group will have a little legacy to set here with resources here. Really valuable parents. Easier to access and have information that they really need when they can take them at their own pace as opposed to within the constraints of a meeting that, you know, where it sometimes gets rushed through or they're just not able to absorb it.

Chrystal White [01:08:23] I think those are really good goal is to push for a year.

Lynn Hathaway [01:08:30] It's ambitious, but I think I think doable. So that's kind of the beauty of that I will capture that all in and drop it into the folder, you think? Does anyone have any other things that they want to bring up at this time moving forward?

Chrystal White [01:08:53] Oh, I do have a friend who's like the Marie Kondo of IEP binders like she's a super organized mom.

Lynn Hathaway [01:09:03] And does she have a sample sheet she would share?

Chrystal White [01:09:05] Sure. I'm going to call her. I'm taking a picture of your little organization tabs and everything. She is one of those parents that would like that happen on May 24th.

Lynn Hathaway [01:09:22] So I think I have to do something official here now. If we are going to adjourn, I need someone to take our cheat sheet.

Chrystal White [01:09:32] Do we need to make that into motions?

Lynn Hathaway [01:09:36] Good point.

Chrystal White [01:09:47] Well, we would make a motion that we focus on IEP resources and goals, specifically videos and organization.

Lynn Hathaway [01:09:58] This is where you've got to note that.

Nicole Grimes [01:10:03] Somebody has to second it.

Lynn Hathaway [01:10:07] Repeat it one more time for us.

Chrystal White [01:10:09] I motion, I'd like to make a motion that our group focuses primarily on IEP resources. With a focus on goals, objectives, organization and utilizing video technology.

Danielle Louque [01:10:41] I second it.

Lynn Hathaway [01:10:41] I'm all in favor? Is there any discussion? Yes. Ayes in favor. And with that, we would also need someone to make a motion to adjourn.

Chrystal White [01:11:07] Are we going to do? We also have to make a motion that we're going to develop a plan for peer mentorship so we can keep developing that idea over. Yeah, if we're going to do it, it has to be in a motion saying that is. That's basically a directive of this group that going forward. That is what we are going to do. If not, I guess, it gets muddy. It's not official. It's an idea but it can be left out. So, I'd like to make a motion that we continue to develop a peer mentorship program for Ascension Parish Schools. At primary, middle and high school levels. So, somebody has to second it.

Danielle Louque [01:12:21] I second it.

Lynn Hathaway [01:12:21] Any discussion?

Biyaka Williams [01:12:24] This may be off topic, but my question was in the parent awareness IEP section.

Chrystal White [01:12:35] How would do transition services, will that fit into it?

Lynn Hathaway [01:12:41] I believe it will, because if we develop a resource guide for parents online like we talked about that transition, all the resources that attach that all the resources that are out there. Access to those, all those points could become a part of that binder. That folks would get at an early age, instead of getting those resources until maybe in high school. Like when your child is just first getting an IEP you would have access to the whole of the whole timeline of it.

Biyaka Williams [01:13:22] I just wanted to make sure I was clear on that.

Lynn Hathaway [01:13:25] Yes, transition is part of the IEP process. Children have to have transition goals.

Chrystal White [01:13:36] Yes, if not we can amend any motion that was made. And add that in.

Lynn Hathaway [01:13:56] And then she just did discussion and more discussion. Do you vote on that motion?

Chrystal White [01:14:07] Are we doing Yays or Nays?

Lynn Hathaway [01:14:08] Yays. Everyone is in favor of the motion passes and the last motion we need to make is to adjourn.

Chrystal White [01:14:21] I make a motion to adjourn.

Biyaka Williams [01:14:21] I second it.